

State Education Association Communicators (SEAComm)

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Royal Sonesta Minneapolis Downtown — Minneapolis, Minnesota

I. Call to Order

President Kelly Hagen called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Approval of 2024 Minutes

A. Motion to approve: Alex Smirnoff, Tennessee

B. Seconded: Kristi Capek, Nebraska

C. **Motion approved.**

III. Treasurer's Report

Budget summary:

1. Sponsorship goal: \$50,000; raised \$64,000
2. Dues/registration goal: 100 registrants; actual: 124, totaling \$74,000
3. Revenue goal: \$116,000; actual revenue: \$147,000
4. Location and event space expenses were low due to Tier 2 city selection
5. Minnesota venue: \$35,000 for food, beverage, service and tax; \$60,000 in required expenses
6. Total conference cost approximately \$114,000–\$117,000
7. Starting balance: \$8,000
8. Ending balance: \$39,958

Motion to approve: Nancy Andrews, Connecticut

Seconded: Keoki Kerr, Hawaii

Motion passed.

IV. Old Business

None.

V. New Business

D. Awards — Individual Recognition Discussion

Discussion was held on whether to add individual recognition to the awards program.

Key points included:

1. Kristi Capek, Nebraska, expressed hesitation about adding individual recognition, echoed by Katie Olmstead, Ohio. Both emphasized that the work is done on behalf of members served.
2. Angel Boose, New Jersey, noted that many projects are team efforts with significant overlap.

3. Maddie Marshall, North Carolina, raised questions about attribution for member-focused work, such as helping members write op-eds.
4. Keoki Kerr, Hawaii, expressed concern about moving to individual names but noted that multiple names could be included.
5. Patrick Rumaker, New Jersey, pointed out that projects involve multiple contributors (writing, editing, graphic design) and that the work is done on behalf of members; individual naming could create internal conflicts or leave people off.
6. Jennifer Marsh, New Jersey, noted that communicators often execute ideas from members and other staff, and the recognition is something to highlight when returning to their organizations.
7. Kristi Capek, NE, relayed concerns from Karen Kilgarin about unintended consequences of individual distribution.
8. Rishanda Richardson, Missouri, recommended also informing HR and adding awards to personnel files to highlight successes.
9. Heather Griffin, NEA, noted that projects funded by NEA grants should include recognition of NEA funding in the awards submission process.

Motion (Sandra Waltman, South Dakota): Add to the awards submission process an indication that a project was funded by NEA.

Seconded: Christina Brey, Wisconsin

Motion approved.

E. Two-Year Planning Cycle Discussion

Discussion was held on moving to a two-year planning schedule, following the model used by NALPSE, which plans two years out for greater flexibility and better capacity for the planning committee. Key points included:

1. Sandra Waltman, South Dakota, advocated for a two-year cycle, citing better negotiating power on pricing, more venue choices and preferred dates, and creative approaches such as booking the same location two years in a row.
2. Christina Brey, Wisconsin, spoke in favor, noting that other boards operate on two- to three-year cycles, which helps participants plan ahead and gives planning committees breathing room. She noted that using the same location has worked well.
3. Kristi Capek, Nebraska, was not opposed but raised questions about officer turnover, noting the historical structure in which officers moved up through the ranks. She also expressed concern about potential penalties for exiting contracts if circumstances change. She noted that SEAComm did Orlando two years in a row and it worked fine.
4. Patrick Rumaker, New Jersey, asked for clarification on the motion.
5. Nancy Andrews, Connecticut, expressed support, citing cost savings and better understanding of Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 city implications, while noting the decision would ultimately rest with the board rather than a popular vote.
6. Sandra Waltman offered to clarify city tier classifications and provide a list.

Motion (Sandra Waltman, South Dakota): That the SEAComm board explore a two-year planning cycle.

Seconded: Patrick Rumaker, New Jersey

Motion passed.

Sandra Waltman noted that this may not prove financially feasible and that the board will get a better idea from a membership poll before moving forward.

VI. Election Report and Nominations

Position	Elected	Nominated By	Result
President	Sarah Cooke, Minnesota	—	Elected
President-Elect	Rishanda Richardson, Missouri	Keoki Kerr, Hawaii	Elected by acclamation
Treasurer	Sandra Waltman, South Dakota	Rachel Beyer, Michigan	Elected by acclamation
Secretary	Rachel Beyer, Michigan	Sandra Waltman, South Dakota	Elected by acclamation
Member-at-Large	Maddie Marshall, North Carolina	Adrian Edzell, North Carolina	Elected by acclamation

VII. 2026 Conference Location

Members were asked to vote for their top three preferred cities via an online form. Voting remained open through Wednesday following the meeting. The top three cities will receive bids.

Angel Boose, New Jersey, asked whether the conference time frame shifts from year to year. Kelly Hagen responded that SEAComm aims for late May to early June, targeting the second week of June.

VIII. Acknowledgment

Sandra Waltman raised a point of personal privilege to acknowledge Kelly Hagen on behalf of the planning committee.

IX. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Patrick Rumaker, New Jersey

Seconded: Alex Smirnoff, Tennessee

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by SEAComm Secretary.

For corrections or amendments, contact the SEAComm board.